


THE ASPEN INSTITUTE

WALTER ISAACSON

President & CEO

July 9, 2014

Ms. Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: 2010 and 2014 Quadrennial Regulatory Reviews, MB Docket Nos. 14-50, 09-182, 07-294

Dear Ms. Dortch:

I am writing as a longtime journalist and lover of local newspapers to support the relaxation or elimination of the rule barring ownership of both a newspaper and a local broadcast outlet in the same market.

Times have radically changed since that rule was put into place almost four decades ago. Now the biggest threat facing local information access is the decline of city newspapers.

The internet and other electronic services provide abundant competition and unfettered outlets for news and opinion. So the fear of concentration of control has been greatly diminished. But these new digital outlets, which are very beneficial, have undermined the economic viability of many newspapers. I know. The paper I first worked for in New Orleans, The States-Item, no longer exists.

Strong local journalism allows the coverage of underserved neighborhoods and holds leaders accountable. In addition, great journalism benefits these days from being able to combine print, video, and audio.

For these reasons, it would seem that we should be encouraging, not forbidding, owners of broadcast outlets to buy or invest in newspapers. We need to do all we can to encourage investment in newspapers and improve the business models for local journalism.

Respectfully,


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